MINUTES

STATE-CAPITAL-REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

June 20, 2012

Attendees: James Bouley (Mayor); Michael Connor (Director, NH Dept. of Administrative Services); Gloria McPherson (City Planner, City of Concord); Sylvia Larsen, (State Senate); Candace White-Bouchard (House), Deb DePyster (Public Rep).

Also in Attendance:

Commissioner Tara Reardon, NH Employment Security

Rich Lavers, NH Employment Security Don Lyford, Project Manager, NH DOT Phil Miles, NHDOT Right-of-Way

Stephen Henninger, Asst. City Planner, City of Concord

Matt Walsh, Project Manager, Community Development, City of Concord

Ed Roberge, City Engineer, City of Concord

Tom Aspell, City Manager

Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager - Development

Jared Nylund, State of NH Department of Administrative Services

Mark Nogueria, State of NH Bureau of Public Works

Rudy Ogdun, State of NH Department of Administrative Services Steve Sacco, State of NH Department of Administrative Services

Meeting came to order at 8:30 A.M.

1. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were not available.

2. State Prison Request for Proposals

Rudy Ogdun provided a brief overview and provided a history of the project. He stated that proposals were received from multiple vendors for male only and male / female facilities in March and April 2012. The evaluation process is underway and the State is seeking to hire additional consultant assistance to conduct a financial review of each proposal. The State hopes to complete the financial evaluations in October 2012. Mr. Ogden reported that there are firms interested in reusing the existing State Prison facility in Concord on North State Street. The Mayor asked if the State had a reuse plan for the Concord Prison in the event a new facility is built elsewhere in the State. Mr. Ogden responded that there is no alternative re-use plan at the present time for the Concord Prison. It is anticipated that the RFP review process will become more open to the public in late 2012.

3. 247-249 Pleasant Street / Human Services Department

Matt Walsh reported that the City was actively negotiating a lease for a new location for the City's Human Services Department and noted that it was possible the City may vacate 247 Pleasant this fall. It was noted that the City has requested a lease extension through February 1, 2013. That request is scheduled to be presented to the Governor and Council later this summer. Mr. Walsh noted that the City subleases a portion of the building to the Merrimack County Visitation Program. He noted that the Visitation Program may need to remain at the property until February 1, 2013.

Jared Nylund reported that the State has completed its historic review of the property, as well as review of title. He noted that nothing in the historic review determined the property was not eligible for the National or State Register of Historic Places and, therefore, there would be no prohibitions on demolishing the building for redevelopment. He noted that the property may have some title issues that might impact redevelopment options.

It was noted that the State and City need to collaborate on a Request for Proposals (RFP) to offer the property for redevelopment. Matt Walsh and Jared Nylund will discuss moving forward on a RFP.

4. Huntress / Coutress / Liberty House

Jared Nylund reported that a bill passed this session to allow the State to divest of the Huntress and Coutress properties. Both are located near Barberry Lane in Concord. He indicated that the State hopes to divest of both parcels by the end of the calendar year.

A discussion of Liberty House ensued. It was noted the house would need to be subdivided from the State Office Park Campus in order to be sold. In addition, like Huntress and Coutress, permission from the Legislature would be required, as State Law presently prohibits the State from divesting of any portion of the Gallen Office Park. City Planning Staff noted the subdivision could be complicated due to vehicular access needs for the rest of the Office Park and Steam Plant near the Liberty House.

5. NH Employment Security Tobey School, 32 South Main Street, 10 West Street

<u>Tobey School Renovation</u>: Mark Nogueira reported that renovation of the Tobey School to serve as the new headquarters for NH Employment Security is moving forward. The building is approximately 70,000 SF. Interior demolition and environmental abatement is currently underway and will be completed by the end of the summer. The design-development phase of the project is complete and full construction will be bid in August. The project is on schedule for NHES to move into Tobey by the end of fall 2013. Mr. Nogueira noted that the project will feature a single level, 234-space parking deck built into the existing hillside on the South Fruit Street frontage of the Tobey Building. Discussion ensued about architectural concerns, as well as potential impacts to the informal "dog park" enclosure.

Discussion of the intersection of Industrial Drive and South Fruit Street ensued. Senator Larsen discussed the impending relocation of the Lafayette Posts and noted that certain State Senators have offered to donate trees to replace the posts.

Rich Lavers noted that, presently, NHES's facility at 10 West Street has approximately 100 visitors per day, Monday – Friday, 8:00AM to 4:30PM. City Manager Aspell noted that the newly updated bus route for Concord Area Transit includes South Fruit Street. This was done, in part, to guarantee continued bus service for NHES's local clientele.

<u>32 South Main Street / 10 West Street</u>: Commissioner Reardon noted that the CORD / Long Range Planning Process is currently underway for both properties. She also reported that a consultation with NH Division of Historic Resources has been completed, per RSA 227-C:9, and that the historic reports required as mitigation by NHDHR will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

The Commissioner noted that there will be no restrictions on the demolition of 32 South Main Street.

The Commissioner also reported that there will be public workshops as part of the Historic Consultants scope of work and she expressed a desire to have the City staff participate in such workshops. It was noted that the City will help organize and promote the workshops, as well as attend the events.

Matt Walsh noted that the City had expressed interest in conducting an RFP process to select a developer / buyer for the 32 South Main Street and 10 West Street properties. He noted that the City has been working

to build interest with potentially interested parties. Commissioner Reardon noted that it would be appropriate for the City to start that process in the near future. Matt Walsh and Rich Lavers will meet to work out details of moving forward with the RFP process in the coming weeks.

6. Concord Steam Update

Carlos Baia reported that the future of the Concord Steam project is uncertain at this time. He noted that the City's request for a project update has gone unanswered for several weeks. It was recommended that the City and State arrange a meeting with Concord Steam soon in order to have a candid conversation about the future of the project. It was noted that the City and State have both entered into special contracts with Concord Power and Steam for electricity and steam. If the project is not going to move forward, it was discussed that the City and State should start pursuing other opportunities for electricity contracts.

Senator Larsen stated that she was under the impression Concord Steam was delayed, as the City had not yet signed a contract for electricity and steam. City staff noted that a contract has been executed by the City and the State of NH and that the delay appears to be related to Concord Steam's inability to secure financing for the project.

7. NHDOT Loudon Road 3.43 Acre Parcel

Carlos Baia reported that the project appears to be resurfacing; however, it has been scaled back to only include the State's 3.43 acre parcel and related City right-of-way strip. The Developer's option for the Johnson Farm has reportedly expired and it appears that the Developer has no interest in pursuing the Johnson property in the immediate future.

A discussion about vacancy rates and other commercial development activity on the Heights ensued. Mr. Baia reported that, despite public perceptions, the vacancy rate on the Heights is relatively low. He also noted recent positive development trends, such as the newly completed Mr. Tux building, Ocean State Job Lot's acquisition of the former Linens & Things space, and the new Dollar General Store.

Phil Miles reminded the City that the State Liquor Commission had previously expressed interest in the NHDOT 3.43 acre property and that the City and its developer should contact the Liquor Commission to see if they have interest in being a tenant at the property.

Mr. Baia stated it was the City's hope to close a deal for the property within the next 12 months.

8. Gulf Street Property / Common Man Restaurant

Matt Walsh noted that roughly 10 years ago, the Common Man Restaurant, the City, and NHDOT had explored a partnership to transfer ownership of a NHDOT property at Gulf Street to the Common Man. The property is currently leased to the Common Man and used as a dirt parking lot. At the time, the deal did not go forward due to environmental concerns at the property.

Mr. Walsh reported that the Common Man recently expressed renewed interest in the property. Specifically, the Common Man is interested in discussing acquisition of the property, in its "as is" environmental condition, for fair market value. The City would be involved to broker the deal using its "right of first refusal" per State Law relating to divestment of State owned property.

Phil Miles from NHDOT indicated that the State would be interested in moving forward with an agreement to sell the property. He noted that no action through CORD would be required, as NHDOT recently secured blanket permission to divest of any surplus DOT property.

Matt Walsh indicated he would follow up with Alex Ray to discuss next steps.

9. Other Business

- A. Liquor Commission Warehouse: The Mayor noted that he was aware of rumors that the Liquor Commission has issued a Request for Proposals for a new warehouse facility to support its operations. He asked whether the State officials present had any insights into the status of that RFP process. No State representatives present had any knowledge of the RFP or status of the solicitation process.
- **B.** Parking Garage Repairs: The Mayor noted that the City will be making repairs to the Durgin House and Firehouse Block Parking Garages over the next 12 months. This may impact parking for State Employees.
- C. Exit 12 I-93 Project: Don Lyford noted that the NHDOT will be meeting with the City Council in July to review options for round-a-bouts as part of the \$4 million bridge project to be constructed at Exit 12 on I-93. The Mayor noted that while residents of Concord have been open to round-a-bouts, recent negative experiences with the new round-a-bout at Route 4 in Boscawen might have a negative impact on the State's proposal for Exit 12. He asked that the State keep this in mind when meeting with the City Council in July.
- D. Downtown Concord Complete Streets \$4.7 Million TIGER Grant: Deb DePyster expressed her enthusiasm for the recently announced \$4.7 million TIGER grant for the Downtown Concord Complete Streets project. The Mayor thanked her for the support of the project and asked her to work to build public support for the initiative. He further noted that building the project will be challenging, but will have tremendous long-term benefit to the community.

10. Future Meeting Date

The next Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2012, at 8:30 AM, City Council Chambers.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew R. Walsh Assistant for Special Projects City of Concord